

Message Text

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PAGE 01 JERUSA 00447 250635Z
ACTION NEA-10

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SUBJ: WEST BANK REACTION TO PNC

1. SUMMARY: RESULTS OF PALESTINIAN NATIONAL COUNCIL (PNC)
APPEARS TO FAVORABLY RECEIVED BY MAJORITY OF WEST BANK PALESTINIANS. ALL APPLAUD DEMOCRATIC PROCESS AND UNITY. A SMALL MINORITY FALUT THE "15 POINTS" FOR REBUFFING JORDAN AND THE U.S., BUT MOST FOUND EXPRESSIONS OF MODERATION THEREIN ADEQUATE FOR PRESENT. MILITANTS WELCOME PNC'S INDEPENDENT STAND VIS A VIS ARAB STATES AND REJECTION OF "AMERICAN SOLUTION." END SUMMARY

2. JUDGING FROM PRESS REACTION AND CONVERSATIONS WITH WIDE SPECTRUM OF EDUCATED PALESTINIANS, THE WEST BANK IS GENERALLY PLEASED WITH THE OUTCOME OF THE PNC. GREAT PRIDE IS TAKEN IN THE DEMOCRATIC PROCEDURES FOLLOWED IN CAIRO ("A GOOD EXAMPLE FOR ALL THE ARAB COUNTRIES" - AL FAJR) AND IN FINAL UNITY ("THE PALESTINIAN MENTALITY HAS MATURED SO THAT THE NAY-SAYERS OF THE PAST WHO HAVE BROUGHT THE PALESTINIAN MOVEMENT TO A STANDBY ARE WEAK..." - AL QUDS)

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PAGE 02 JERUSA 00447 250635Z

3. A SMALL MINORITY, REPRESENTED BY BETHLEHEM'S MAYOR FREIJ, ARE UNHAPPY. THEY BELIEVE PNC SHOULD HAVE PLAYED TO WORLD PUBLIC OPINION, THE ARAB STATES AND THE U.S. BY UNAMBIGUOUSLY ACCEPTING ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO EXIST AND 242. TALK OF ARMED STRUGGLE TO RECOVER PALESTINE THEY CONSIDER UNREALISTIC AND COUNTERPRODUCTIVE AND PLAYS INTO ISRAELI HANDS. SUCH MODERATES

REGRET THAT FINAL COMMUNIQUE REBUFFS TWO POTENTIAL ALLIES: JORDAN, WHICH CAN NOW JUSTIFIABLY HAREN ITS STAND TOWARDS THE PALESTINIANS, AND THE U.S. WHOSE PRESIDENT FOR THE FIRST TIME HAD EXPRESSED SYMPATHY FOR A PALESTINIAN HOMELAND.

4. MAJORITY, HOWEVER, FIND EXPRESSIONS OF MODERATION IN 15 POINTS: NO EXPLICIT CALL FOR SECULAR, DEMOCRATIC STATE IN ALL OF PALESTINE, GENERAL AGREEMENT (INCLUDING "REJECTIONIST") TO WB/GAZA STATE, AND A GREEN LIGHT TO NEGOTIATIONS IF THEY ARE NOT AT THE PALESTINIANS EXPENSE. DEPUTY MAYOR ZAFER AL MASRI OF NABLUS BELIEVES WILLINGNESS OF PLO TO GO TO GENEVA IS A PUBLIC STATEMENT OF ARAFAT'S PRIVATE WILLINESS TO RECOGNIZE ISRAEL WITHIN ITS 1967 BORDER. THESE OBSERVERS ALSO CREDIT REPORTS OF SIGNIFICANT, SECRET MANDATE FOR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE TO ENABLE THE PLO TO PLAY A ROLE IN THE UP-COMING PEACE EFFORTS. GREATER CONCESSIONS THAN THESE NOT JUSTIFIED, THEY BELIEVE, IN THE FACE OF CONTINUED ALLEGED ISRAELI INTRANSIGENCE AND PRESIDENT CARTER'S AMBIGIOUS--ALBEIT WELCOMED--STATEMENTS IN WHICH PALESTINIANS ARE STILL REFERRED TO AS REFUGEES.

5. A MILITANT, BUT VOCAL, MINORITY ON THE LEFT APPALUDED EX-PLICIT REJECTION OF 242 AND AMERICAN "CAPITULATIONIST" SOLUTIONS. INTERESTINGLY, THIS GROUP QUITE COMFORTABLE WITH PNC STAMP OF APPROVAL FOR CONTACTS WITH "NON-ZIONIST" JEWS.

6. COMMENT: WE HAVE HEARD LITTLE GRUMBLING FROM WEST BANK PALESTINIANS BECAUSE THEY WERE NOT SIGNIFICANTLY DIRECTLY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 JERUSA 00447 250635Z

REPRESENTED AT THE PNC. IN GENERAL, THE BRAVE WORDS FROM CAIRO HAVE BEEN A TONIC FOR THE WB MALAISE WHICH RESULTED FROM SYRIA'S CHASTISEMENTS OF THE PLO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE IN DAMASCUS, SADAT'S SPECULATIONS ON THE WEST BANK'S FUTURE AND, FOR MANY, THE PLO'S EMBARRASSING RAPPROCHEMEENT WITH HUSSEIN. THOUGHFUL OBSERVERS, HOWEVER, HOPE THAT ARAFAT, HAVE EMERGED STRONGER FROM THE PLO'S "ELECTION CAMPAIGN" CAN NOW USE HIS MANDATE TO REALIZE TANGIVLE RESULTS FROM THE WEEK'S RHETORIC.

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